

Attorney Docket No. AHUG.011
Serial No. 10/633,471
Response to Office Action dated 2/01/2005

A. REMARKS

- 1. Double Patenting Rejection.** The examiner rejected claims 1-66 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-70 of copending Application No. 10/671,141 (the '141 application). The '141 application is a CIP application, and was filed to add rods to the specification and claims. A preliminary amendment to the '141 application has been filed concurrently with this response to limit the claims to rods, and not to tubing which is the subject of this application (10/633,471). Applicant submits that this distinction makes the double patenting rejection moot.
- 2. Specification.** The examiner stated that the status of the application noted on page 7 should be updated. Application 10/671,141 (the '141 application) has issued as United States Patent 6,666,274. Applicant has amended the specification to indicate the changed status on page 7 and also in each other location in which reference was made to the '141 application.

3. Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102 (b)

a. The Examiner: The examiner rejected claims 1,3,5,7,12-18,20,22,24,29-38,41-46,50-53, 55, 57 and 62-66 as being anticipated by US 398,620. The examiner rejected claims 1,2,4,7-9,12-19,21,24-26,29-38,41-46,50-52,54,57-59 and 62-66 as being anticipated by US 6,116,658. The examiner rejected claims 1,3-5, 7-18, 20-22, 24-55 and 57-66 as being anticipated by US 4,836,305. The examiner rejected claims 1,3-9,12-18,20-26,29-38,41-59 and 62-66 as being anticipated by US 1,781,091.

b. Response: Claims 10-11, 27-28, 39-40, and 60-61 have only a single reference cited against them. Each of these pairs of claims include the limitation "at least one conduit" and the pair is directed to either a wire adapted to carry an electrical current, or a material adapted to carry an optical signal. The reference is US 4,836,305 (the '305 patent). The '305 patent discloses conduits running within a tubing. The '305 patent discloses "engagement between drill

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“pipes” in “essentially an interleaving arrangement of drive lugs” and “recesses” (9:61-63). The ‘305 patent discloses electrical connectors enclosed in a connector block (116) (10:28-47), conduit seal (86) (10:50-11:5) and intermediate connector (126) (10:50-11:50). The ‘305 patent does not disclose a way to align the connectors of one tubing section for automatic engagement with the connectors of another tubing section using only splines, receptacles and connectors.

Applicant has amended each independent claim to add limitations to show engagement of a plurality of first connectors and second connectors by mating of a corresponding plurality of splines and receptacles.

Applicant submits that rejections based upon the other references are moot in light of the amendments.

4. Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103(a)

a. The Examiner: The examiner rejected claims 1-5,7-9,12-22,24-26,29-38,41-55,57-59 and 62-66 as being unpatentable over US 1,589,781 in view of US 3,463,228.

b. Response: Applicant submits that the examiner’s 103(a) rejection is moot in light of the amendments.